

****ATTENTION****

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SWAN IDENTIFICATION

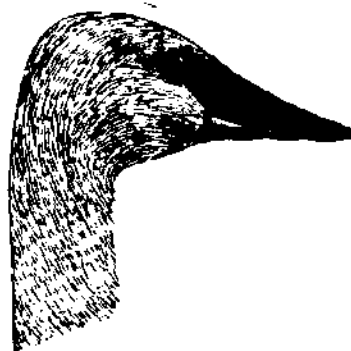
Trumpeter or Tundra (Whistler)?

--- It's important to know

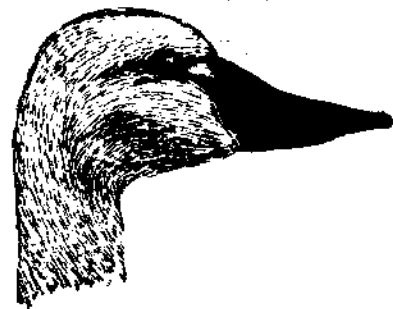
Reports from wildlife observers can help biologists monitor the recovery of trumpeter swans--a species of concern in Washington. Positive identification is essential, as trumpeters often mix with the relatively common tundra (whistling) swans in flocks as small as 10 or fewer birds. Distinguishing trumpeters from tundras (whistlers) isn't easy, but it is possible by paying close attention to a few distinctive characteristics.

HERE ARE THE BEST WAYS TO SPOT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SPECIES.

Head Profiles



Trumpeter



Tundra (Whistler)

Bill Color:

TUNDRA (Whistler)--black bill, usually with yellow spot of varying size in front of eye (may or may not be present).

TRUMPETER--black bill with red border on lower mandible (may be present on some tundras [whistlers]).

Head and Bill Shape:

TUNDRA (Whistlers)--bill more dish-shaped in profile, bill smaller in proportion to head compared to trumpeter. Head smoothly rounded compared to trumpeter.

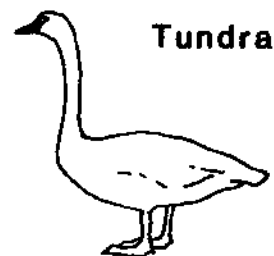
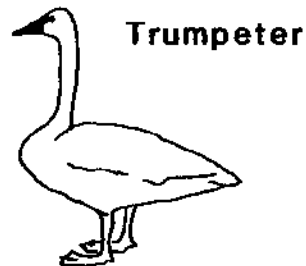
TRUMPETER--bill heavy in proportion to head. Profile straight, head shape resembling that of canvasback duck.

Voice:

An absolute method of species identification.

TUNDRA (Whistler)--high pitched, often quavering 00-00-00 accentuated in the middle; or WOO-HO, WOO-HO, WOO-HO; WOO-00-WOO; or WHO-WHO.

TRUMPETER--sonorous, loud, low pitched, bugle-like call.



Trumpeters, afloat or ashore, resting or in mild state of alertness, generally have the neck kinked back at base so that it appears to rise from the fore-part of the back forming a C shape rather than from the very front of the body as in tundra swans.

Juvenile Identification:

Juvenile swans have a gray body coloration. Their bills are splotched pink and black. During late December and January juvenile trumpeters are much darker than juvenile tundras (whistlers).

Flight Profile



swan



goose

Report your swan sightings to: Nongame Wildlife Program, Washington Department of Game, c/o Evergreen State College, 2109 Seminar Building, TA-00, Olympia, WA 98505 and Trumpeter Swan project, 20717 C Highway 99, #144, Lynnwood, WA 98036, phone (206) 775-0137

For additional information on swans contact the Trumpeter Swan Project.

NOTE: Swans are sensitive to human intrusion, so stay in your vehicle while observing flocks.